



Reducing prejudice through biased group contact?

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Abstract. Using the methods of critical discourse analysis, this article analyzes the TV program *Mission: Vilnija* as an example designed to fight stereotypes about Lithuanian national minorities. The article shows how instead of improving inter-group relations, the program helps to ensure the status quo of unequal intergroup relations between the Lithuanian majority and the country's national minorities. The case analysis supports the argument that if the idea of parasocial contact and prejudice reduction is built upon non-reflected, biased premises, it will not eliminate these forms of prejudice but will only preserve and/or reinforce them.

Keywords: contact theory, parasocial contact, prejudice, national minority.

Introduction

This article discusses the Allportian idea of contact theory. It touches up one of its variations – parasocial contact theory – and addresses the problem of the potential misuse of this theory. The argument is made that if this way of reducing prejudice is in itself biased, the outcome of such contact, then, can be contrary than expected. To support the argument, this study uses an example of a TV program called *Mission: Vilnija*, broadcasted by the Lithuanian national television and originally designed to fight stereotypes about the national minorities living in the state's southeastern part, historically known as the “Vilnija region” (Lith. *Vilniaus kraštas*, Pol. *Wilenszczyzna*). By using one episode of this program dedicated to the topic of national minorities serving in the Lithuanian armed forces, this article attempts to show how parasocial contact can be biased and thus unable to reduce prejudice.

This is to be achieved through analyzing relevant media content using the method of critical discourse analysis (CDA). This method can be defined in the following words:

[A] problem-orientated interdisciplinary research program, subsuming a variety of approaches, each with different theoretical models, research methods, and agendas. What unites all approaches is a shared interest in the semiotic dimensions of power, injustice, and political-eco-

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nomic, social, or cultural change in society. [...] CDA studies [...] social phenomena which are necessarily complex and thus require a multi/inter/transdisciplinary and multimethodological approach (Wodak 2014, p. 302).

The article contributes to the existing literature on how minorities and their issues are represented in Lithuanian (speaking) media (Frėjutė-Rakauskienė 2016; 2009; Petrušauskaitė et al. 2015). It starts by presenting the (parasocial) contact theory. Subsequently, the main features of the method of critical discourse analysis are outlined; finally, this study analyzes a particular episode of the TV program.

Intergroup Contact Theory and Its Variations

One of the best-known techniques of prejudice reduction is the intergroup contact theory (ICT), which originated from the works of psychologist Gordon Allport. In his well-known work *The Nature of Prejudice*, Allport hypothesized that:

Prejudice (unless deeply rooted in the character structure of the individual) may be reduced by equal status contact between majority and minority groups in the pursuit of common goals. The effect is greatly enhanced if this contact is sanctioned by institutional supports (i.e., by law, custom or local atmosphere), and provided it is of a sort that leads to the perception of common interests and common humanity between members of the two groups (1954, p. 281).

In 2008, Pettigrew and Tropp published a meta-analysis of 515 studies on the impact inter-group contact has on reducing prejudice. These studies were conducted during the period between the 1940s and 2000 and contained responses from 250 593 individuals across 38 nations. The result of this meta-analysis generally supported the intergroup contact hypothesis and established that the contact between individual members of different groups leads to reduced prejudice toward the entire out-group. The authors also found that the relationship between contact and prejudice varies significantly depending on the specific groups involved. Intergroup contact was most successful in cases of contact between heterosexuals and gay individuals, while the effect in cases of racial and ethnic group contact was less successful. Studies also showed that the least effective was contact of groups of different age as well as between groups with and without mental disability (Pettigrew & Tropp 2008, p. 267–268).

The conditions for an effective direct intergroup contact, described by Allport, are hard to meet, which makes this theory hard to apply in practice. However, prejudice can be reduced through various forms of indirect or parasocial contacts, i.e., extended contact, when one learns that an in-group member is friends with an out-group member; vicarious contact, through observing how an in-group member interacts with a member of an out-group; through an imagined contact, when one imagines an interaction with an out-group member (Dovidio, Eller & Hewstone 2011, p. 148). Not only indirect contact can have a positive effect on intergroup attitudes, but, as argued by Eller, Dovidio and Hewstone (2011, p. 155), it can also have broader effects, for example, reducing intergroup threat or increasing intergroup understanding and trust.

Parasocial contact, based on imagined interactions, is one form of indirect contact. Schiappa, Gregg & Hewes formulated the Parasocial Contact Theory and hypothesised that “[i]f we can learn from televised characters representing distinct social groups, then it is possible that parasocial contact could influence attitudes about such groups in a manner consistent with the influence of direct intergroup contact” (2005, p. 97). The hypothesis was in several case studies, each of which generally supported it. As described by Eller, Dovidio and Hewstone, “positive media portrayals of interactions and relations between in-group and out-group members can potentially change the intergroup orientations of millions of viewers, including and perhaps especially those whose opportunities for intergroup contact are rare” (2011, pp. 148–149). The scope of exposure is a serious advantage that indirect and parasocial contacts have over direct contact – in reality, it would be hard to organize a contact between large groups, while the various forms of media make this much more possible. However, as noted by Mutz and Goldman, despite the fact that parasocial relationships provide a way through which media exposure could reduce prejudice, “the requirements of this theory create a narrow scope of potential impact” (2010, p. 249). According to these scholars:

[I]t is limited because beneficial effects would require strong and positive emotional bonds with out-group characters, the kind resulting from repeated exposures. Many people probably have feelings about television characters, but only with a relatively few television characters do viewers form deep bonds (i.e. parasocial relationships). Further precisely because of pre-existing prejudice, in-group viewers would be unlikely to perceive an out-group television character as highly familiar, likeable, and similar to him or herself (2010, p. 249).

Thus, although parasocial contact, if compared to direct contact, is of larger exposure, there are some reasonable doubts about the sustainability of the effect that it creates.

Methodology

Before starting to discuss the case of the TV program shown on the Lithuanian national television and designed to fight stereotypes about the state’s national minorities, the main methodological tools for doing discourse analysis are briefly presented. Later, the case of the parasocial contact, intended through the TV program, is presented and contextualized; the discourse analysis is conducted afterward.

In her work on the discursive construction of Austrian national identity, Ruth Wodak (2009) proposed to conduct critical discourse analyses (CDA) by dividing them into three dimensions. The first dimension refers to the contents of the linguistic construction of a common political present and future. The second one deals with strategies, i.e., constructive strategies attempting “to construct and establish a certain national identity by promoting unification and solidarity as well as differentiation” (Wodak 2009, p. 33). The final dimension is that of means of realization – “lexical units and syntactic devices, which serve to construct unification, unity, sameness, differentiation, uniqueness, origin, continuity, gradual or abrupt change, autonomy, heteronomy and so on” (Wodak 2009, p. 35). Among the most important of such means is that of a personal reference, including anthroponymic generic

terms, personal pronouns and quantifiers (determiners or pronouns indicative of quantity (e.g., all, both)). The plural personal pronoun “we” is a particularly interesting discursive mean. Used metonymically (when one word or phrase is substituted for another with which it is closely associated, i.e., as in the use of “Washington” for the United States government), it can indicate sameness. As noted by Wodak, (2009, p. 47) it can refer to the national territory conceived as a particular country’s “we-body” or “national-body” and the number of the country’s inhabitants.

Wodak follows Johannes Volmert’s observations and argues that “[b]ecause of its inherent properties, the deictic expression ‘we’ can be very well used in the service of ‘linguistic imperialism’ to verbally annex and usurp” (2009, p. 45). She quotes him:

As Volmert argues, “[a] speaker has at his/her disposal a whole range of (clever) options with which to present the interests and affairs of ‘we-groups’ in the public sphere. In a speech during an election campaign, for example, a speaker can unite himself and his audience into a single ‘community sharing a common destiny’ by letting fall into oblivion all differences in origin, confession, class and lifestyle with a simple ‘we’ (for example, a ‘we Germans’). This ‘community sharing a common destiny’ may be bound by different degrees of intimacy and familiarity: from the common economic interests of ‘society as a whole’ to the emotional needs of a family-type community (Volvart 1989, p. 123 in Wodak 2009, p. 45).

One of many possible constructive strategies is unification and cohesivation – “emphasis on unifying common features/shared sorrow or worries (for example, at a subnational or national level) or emphasis on the will to unify/co-operate/feel and show solidarity. In case of a such strategy, means can vary from using lexemes with semantic components creating unification to making appeals for co-operation, pulling together and solidarity or using idiomatic metaphors (i.e. ‘we act all in concert’)” (Wodak 2009, p. 38).

This article focuses mostly on the third dimensions of CDA as described by Wodak, in order to analyze the means of the realization of an idea to construct a cohesive national “we,” as it was attempted to be achieved through the supposedly unbiased media representations of the members of Lithuanian minorities.

The Case:

Countering Propaganda and Constructing a Cohesive National “We”

In order to understand the emergence of the special TV program designed particularly for the minorities-inhabited Vilnius region, it is necessary to explain the context of where the idea of such a program emerged. In 2014, Russia justified Crimea’s occupation by claiming that “Nationalists, neo-Nazis, Russophobes and anti-Semites executed this coup [in Ukraine]” and that “those who opposed the coup were immediately threatened with repression”; therefore, it was not able to “abandon Crimea and its residents in distress.”¹ Therefore, the loyalty of ethnic minorities – first the Russians, and then the Poles – to the Lithuanian state quickly

¹ “Address by President of the Russian Federation” (March 18, 2014), kremlin.ru. Accessed September 26, 2018, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603>.

became a topic of Lithuanian national security.² This was caused by a fear of Russia's possible attempt to destabilize Lithuanian society through manipulating Lithuania's Russian-speaking minorities (primarily Russians, but also Poles, as they have been Russified during the Soviet era) by means of a hybrid war (i.e., propaganda or cyberattacks) or even military intervention by Russia intended to "protect" these minorities the same way that it was done in Ukraine. In order to avoid any possible attempts of such "protection" originating from abroad, the state's president, Dalia Grybauskaitė, began visiting Lithuania's southeastern province, which is mostly inhabited by Lithuanian Polish minority, more often. In her speeches, she began to refer to Polish and Russian minorities as "our Poles," "our Russians" or "the Lithuanian/Lithuania's Poles/Russians." These elements of speech – "our" or "the Lithuanian/Lithuania's" should have first and foremost meant "not Russia's" and thus can be seen as the state's claim for sovereignty. In 2015, during one of her visits to Šalčininkai – a predominantly Polish town in the southeastern province of the country – she stated that she "equally love[s] all people of *our Lithuania*, they all are citizens of Lithuania. [...] There's *one Lithuania*, and Lithuania is the homeland of these people as well."³ During her next visit to Šalčininkai, where she visited a summer school organized by The Lithuanian Riflemen's Union (a militarized non-profit organization supported by the state), she stated that: "Lithuania is loved and, in case of a need, would be protected by all the Lithuanian citizens of different nationalities. This is proven by the fact that this camp, as well as the activities of the Riflemen's Union in general, is attended by Lithuanians, Poles, Russians and people of other nationalities, who want to learn how to protect their country. When united, *we are* an invincible force."⁴

It needs to be mentioned that among the participants of this summer school were not only minority members but also some youngsters coming from Ukraine. Thus, her appearance in this youth camp had a symbolic message – Lithuania and its minorities stand together with Ukraine, hence against Russia. During her stay in Šalčininkai, the president also gave an interview to a Polish minority newspaper *Kurier Wilenski*, in which she stated that "tensions between Lithuania's Polish and Lithuanian citizens are created artificially, in seeking certain political goals."⁵

To sum, the rhetoric in which the state's president started to appeal to Lithuania's national minorities more often illustrates an increase of the preoccupation about the minorities' loyalty to the state as well as the need to do something for this loyalty to be ensured. The President's communication of national unity represents an attempt of the linguistic construction of political commonness. The question, then, is how this was attempted in the first place?

² In its annual reports on threats to national security, published in 2014 and 2015, The State Security Department mentioned links between pro-Russian and Lithuanian Polish politicians as well as Russia's attempts to manipulate Lithuanian Poles in order to spread its influence in the country and to prevent closer ties between Poland and Lithuania. More information: "2014 report on threats to national security," accessed September 26, 2018, <https://www.vsd.lt/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Gresmiu-vertinimas-2014.pdf> and "2015 report on threats to national security", accessed September 26, 2018, <https://www.vsd.lt/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/bendras-2015-gresmiu-vertinimas.pdf>.

³ "D. Grybauskaitė: „Aš vienodai myliu visus Lietuvos žmones“, accessed December 13, 2015, <http://lietuovos-diena.lrytas.lt/aktualijos/d-grybauskaite-as-vienodai-myliu-visus-lietuovos-zmones.htm>.

⁴ "Prezidentė Šalčininkuose lankėsi šaulių stovykloje," *Kauno diena*, accessed December 13, 2015, <http://kau-no.diena.lt/naujienos/lietuva/politika/prezidente-salcininkuose-lankesi-sauliu-stovykloje-705235>.

⁵ Ibid.

In 2015, when a survey showed that approximately 58% of Lithuanian national minorities – not excluding the Poles – receive information about the events in Ukraine from the Russian media sources, and that approximately 26% of the surveyed members of minorities blamed Ukraine in its conflict with Russia,⁶ an idea to establish a TV program for minorities was raised. The implementation of the idea did not take long. In the autumn of 2015, the state's national broadcaster started a TV program called *Mission: Vilnija* (Lith. Misija: Vilnija). Quoting the program's producer, the new program was expected to tell "the stories of the people of the Vilnius region, to analyze, to help solve the region's problems and to help the Lithuanian people of a different ethnic backgrounds to get a better understanding of each other as well as the processes happening in the state."⁷ The program's producer said that one should not make a mistake in judging the content of the program: "this will not be yet another program for ethnic minorities. The aim of the program is to become a mirror, where any person from the state's province would see the connection with their own lives. Not only would they see it, but maybe they would also get useful advice how to overcome common problems."⁸

In other words, the program was designed to counter Russian propaganda, and to ensure that the Lithuanian minorities, who receive information mostly from Russian TV channels,⁹ would get the "correct" news and would not be left misinformed. The idea of parasocial contact, in which the program would serve as a mirror allowing different people(s) to identify with each other through being exposed to shared problems, marks the aim of improving the relations of different ethnic groups in Lithuania and by doing so to construct unified national community. The minorities, primarily the Poles – the biggest national minority in the Vilnius region – would be given a voice on the national television (the majority of the TV program's crew are Polish journalists), while Lithuanians would be exposed, through indirect contact, to the everyday lives of Poles, depicted as co-citizens in the program.

CDA:

Means and Forms of Realization – Montage and the Personal Pronoun "We"

Due to the lack of space, this section analyzes only a few parts of Episode 11 from the TV program *Mission: Vilnija*.¹⁰ This episode was chosen because, unlike other episodes, it was

⁶ "Apklausa: Lietuvos tautinės mažumos apie įvykius Ukrainoje sužino iš Rusijos," Lrt.lt, accessed September 27, 2018, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/88819/apklausa-lietuvos-tautines-mazumos-apie-ivykius-ukrainoje-suzino-is-rusijos>; "Russian Propaganda Creates 'Parallel Reality' for Lithuania's Ethnic Minorities," DELFI, accessed December 13, 2015, <http://en.delfi.lt/lithuania/society/russian-propaganda-creates-parallel-reality-for-lithuanias-ethnic-minorities.d?id=69823932>.

⁷ "K. Zvonkuvienė: „Ieškokime to, kas mus vienija, o ne skiria", *lrytas.lt*, accessed September 27, 2018, <https://zmones.lrytas.lt/tv-antena/2015/08/18/news/k-zvonkuviene-ieskokime-to-kas-mus-vienija-o-ne-skiria-826963/>.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ "Większość Osób Mniejszości Narodowych O Ukrainie Dowiaduje Się Z Rosyjskiej Telewizji," ["Most of the People of Ethnic Minorities Find Out about Ukraine from Russian Television], DELFI, accessed December 17, 2015, <http://pl.delfi.lt/aktualia/litwa/wiekszosc-osob-mniejszosci-narodowych-o-ukrainie-dowiaduje-sie-z-rosyjskiej-telewizji.d?id=66838524>.

¹⁰ *Misija: Vilnija* (Episode 11) – LRT, Lietuvos radijas ir televizija, accessed September 25, 2018, <https://www.lrt.lt/mediateka/irasas/88397/misija-vilnija>

focused on the question of security and its various forms – social, military and that of minority rights. This section focuses on the means of realizing the strategy for building a more cohesive national community, by integrating minorities into the common information field of the country. Two aspects are analyzed here: the ways discourse is framed and the linguistic means the discourse is practiced through.

In the episode analyzed here, the narrator presents the characters of the program – Lithuanian conscripts of Polish origin – by saying a few words about them. Afterward, the conscripts' remarks follow. This section shows biases in the way Polish conscripts are presented. Second, it focuses on how the personal plural pronoun “we” is used by the TV program's crew and by the conscripts and shows how “we” does not mean the same in each of the two cases.

At the beginning of the program, when the host of the show – a Lithuanian Pole, by the way – turns to the issue of military security, she announces that this time, the talk would be focused on, as she put it, “unusual soldiers.” That is to say, soldiers of minority origin. Pawel¹¹ – the first interlocutor – is asked about the possible troubles when trying to deal with the new situation of being in the armed forces. He answered that

“[g]radually, we became accustomed to each other, have almost learned each other's surnames; it's easier now, we have started to communicate with each other. There are no conflicts among us, we try to help each other, to explain everything if someone does not understand something [...] it's not that if someone does not get something we spit [“to not care”] and leave him – no, everyone helps each other, *we're like one family*.”¹²

The journalist interviewing these “unusual soldiers” attempted to deny the myth that it can be harder to integrate in the armed forces for those soldiers who do not speak Lithuanian at home. However, another interviewed volunteer Andrej, presumably of Russian origin, states that the process of habituation was not hard for him, as he had been speaking Lithuanian both at home and at school. Therefore, there are few moments worth being taken into consideration here. The show's host, who is a Lithuanian Pole herself, thinks the minority soldiers to be a somewhat unusual phenomenon. Second, although the aim of depicting these soldiers is to eliminate the stereotype of the soldiers possibly having troubles with the Lithuanian language while serving in the military, it is not really clear what made the authors of the program think there is such a stereotype at all. In other words, the idea of the elimination of such stereotype was in itself biased, because the existence of the stereotype was assumed. The case of Andrej, who had been speaking Lithuanian at home and probably knows the language quite well, not so much refutes the assumed stereotype of soldiers not speaking Lithuanian as he brings doubt whether the question about such a stereotype is relevant at all.

One can also see how the function of the soldiers' utterances presented in this TV program is to strengthen and to give validity to the official discourse of a “single Lithuania,” represented by the official speeches of the institution of the state's President. At some point, the journalist narrating the program says the following: “[t]hese soldiers can be proud of

¹¹ Here and elsewhere the names of the interlocutors have been changed.

¹² *Misija: Vilnija* (Episode 11).

themselves, because they have already made a great job – they have proven to Lithuania that the reintroduction of compulsory military service is not painful and, as it is unanimously said by the soldiers, it *does not matter of what nationality you are*.¹³ Here it is interesting that the journalist talks about something that does not matter – one’s nationality – and by mentioning this, he shows that this is exactly what matters to be mentioned. The journalist continues framing the prospective utterances of the program’s guests. When talking about another volunteer, the journalist says that “Lech adds that the most important thing is to understand the meaning and aim of the service.”¹⁴ After the journalist’s early intervention and with the help of montage, Lech is finally able to tell the viewers what this “most important thing” previously mentioned is, after all, “Lithuania, where we live, and [that] Lithuania is *our homeland*, that’s why one needs to fight for this homeland.”¹⁵

Here we can see the appearance of the “our homeland” trope. The topic of the “unusual soldiers” is concluded by talking to the last protagonist, Marek – a young Lithuanian of Polish origin playing in an ethnically diverse, popular Vilnius-based ska-punk band Will’N’ska. To the viewers, he is presented as a volunteer. The journalist introduces Marek as a person who takes the oath to serve in the armed forces seriously: “[Marek] says that, being aware of how important it is, he has no doubts about it, although *we all* know how serious Lithuania’s geopolitical situation is, and that a soldier may need to act at any moment.”¹⁶ After the journalist finishes and tells us something *we all* know – the country’s serious geopolitical situation – the viewers are prepared to meet the volunteer, and Marek’s comment is tabled: “I feel ready, to tell the truth, I am waiting for this day, because it will probably be the first oath of such importance in my life. Because after yesterday’s meeting with the captain, the conclusion is that this oath is among the most important ones, because you give yourself, your life, because you swear to protect *your motherland – Lithuania*.”¹⁷ Hereby, the episode’s rubric, dedicated to these so-called unusual soldiers, reaches its culmination point.

But is there a difference between Lech’s “our homeland” and the President’s “one Lithuania”? Do both parties mean the same thing by saying “our”? As noted by sociologist Pille Petersoo, the “we” is an obscure and fluid category, and when employed in the media, it can mean several different national categories to different readers or viewers. According to Petersoo, “[w]hat does ‘we’ really mean in any particular case remains open for speculation and interpretation, and whether the ‘we’ always perform a nationalising role is also questionable” (2007, p. 433). Therefore, we can assume that for the soldiers like Lech, serving in the armed forces is a personal thing. By using such phrases as “we all know,” or by saying that these soldiers (of minority origins) had proven that defending Lithuania is “not a pain,” or by claiming that one’s nationality does not matter when it comes to the question of a national security, the narrator/journalist tries to avoid the ambiguity defined by Petersoo and attempts to portray these soldiers as a part of the national concern over national security. Individuals

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

here became what the state's President would constantly refer to – the “one Lithuania”. In other words, as defined by Wodak, the people are subsumed under a “we,” and these kind of plural pronouns refer to the national territory conceived as the Lithuanian “we-body” or the “national-body.”

But the most striking feature of this strategy to build closer ties between the state's dominant and minority ethnic groups through mediated contact is the language spoken in this TV program. The parasocial contact is intended through and conducted in the Lithuanian language. The “we” constituting “our Lithuania” speak Lithuanian. No subtitles are used, and thus even the Poles – both the journalist making the program and the program's guests – speak Lithuanian. This is surprising not because Poles or Russians allegedly do not understand or do not speak the language. In fact, although Lithuanian differs significantly from Russian or Polish, both minorities speak Lithuanian quite well. It is surprising because the program was started with an aim to divert these minorities from the Russian information sphere. Therefore, one could have possibly thought that such a program should have been broadcasted in one of the minority languages. However, apparently this was not the case.

These means of realization – the showing of “unusual soldiers” (although they are quite usual in the Lithuanian army), the aim to refute stereotypes about minorities, not speaking in Lithuanian (though there's no reason to doubt their knowledge of the Lithuanian language), and, finally, the topics discussed about “our homeland,” but talking about it solely in Lithuanian – suggest that the real mission of *Mission: Vilnija* was to integrate the minorities without changing the *status quo* of the intergroup relations among the state's dominant and minority ethnic groups. The security interest underlying these aims and the ways of realizing them explains this paradox of integrating but keeping minorities on unequal level with the national “we.” There is inherent bias in this intended contact, and the reason why these soldiers are seen as unusual is that they are seen as a possible threat to national security. The program tries to depict the soldiers, as well as the national minorities in general, as normal, co-operative citizens, as a part of a unifying, national “we,” as defined by Wodak. However, simple nationalistic fears sometimes become visible through the repeatedly pronounced beliefs that everything is good with “our” minorities, and this repetition then signals the actual anxiety regarding the “normality” of these citizens.

Conclusion

This article analyzed an attempt to reduce prejudice against Lithuanian national minorities with the help of parasocial contact. Changes in international security environment, brought about by Russia's annexing of Crimea in 2014, lead to an increase in concerns about the minorities' loyalty to the Lithuanian state. Therefore, a special TV program, titled *Mission: Vilnija*, was created for Lithuanian minorities living in the southeastern part of the country. However, the close examination of the means of realization of this attempt to apply parasocial contact showed that the attempted reduction of prejudice was biased, as of the TV program's implicit aim was to construct a homogeneous, national “we.” Therefore, the program's success in reducing prejudice about minorities remains highly doubtful, because

it exposed the minorities to prejudices which these minorities did not necessarily hold about themselves (i.e., that the minorities are disloyal to the state). Moreover, it could be argued that instead of improving inter-group relations, the programme helped to ensure the *status quo* of unequal intergroup relations between the dominant Lithuanian majority and the national minorities (although the TV program was dedicated to the minorities, it was lead in the Lithuanian language). To sum up, the program was biased because, as the content of the program has revealed, the minorities were treated as *a priori* disloyal to the state. Hence, if the idea of parasocial contact and prejudice reduction is built upon non-reflected, biased premises, it will do little to eliminate these prejudice and instead will only help to preserve and reproduce them further.

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